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**ABC7/WLS-TV CHICAGO TO PRODUCE AND BROADCAST
'GRADUATION 2020: FOR CHICAGO. BY CHICAGO.,' A VIRTUAL CEREMONY FOR
CHICAGO'S GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**

**Virtual Graduation Is Hosted by 'Hamilton' Star Miguel Cervantes, With Commencement Address
by Oprah Winfrey, Joined by Celebrity Appearances Including Award-Winning Hip-Hop Artist
Common**

**Special to air Sunday, June 14, (1:00 – 2:00 p.m. CDT) on ABC7 Chicago, Localish Network, and
multiple radio and television stations across the city of Chicago**

**Stream live at ABC7Chicago.com, ABC7's connected Apps, ABC7Chicago's [Facebook](#) and Localish's
[Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and Windy City Live's [Facebook](#)**



ABC7/WLS-TV Chicago and ABC's Localish digital network to broadcast and exclusively produce **"Graduation 2020: For Chicago. By Chicago.,"** a live 60-minute first-of-its kind, citywide virtual graduation ceremony to celebrate the city of Chicago's 35,000 graduating seniors. The special will recognize the tenacity and achievements of Chicago's high school seniors who are graduating during unprecedented times. The ceremony will air **SUNDAY, JUNE 14 at 1:00 p.m. CDT**, hosted by **Chicago's "Hamilton" star Miguel Cervantes**, and commencement keynote by **Oprah Winfrey**.

The star-studded lineup will appear virtually to give tribute and well-wishes to graduating seniors' achievements. Confirmed appearances include Gov. JB Pritzker, "The Voice"'s Katie Kadan performing the

national anthem, and an opening narrated by Chicago's hometown, hip-hop recording artist, Common, the first rapper to win an Emmy®, Grammy®, and an Academy Award®, with many more special appearances.

The televised production captures inspiring citywide images of Chicago, its high schools and students through original and drone aerial footage, despite a pandemic and citywide protests. Partnered with footage of tributes and speeches from well-known Chicagoans ranging from Mayor Lightfoot to Chicago's professional sport stars to extraordinary high school graduates; the special also showcases popular high school band performances that display the pride and culture of the city. ABC7 made [submission links](#) available to all seniors for their own "Pomp and Circumstance Graduation Walks" videos, which production then paired with music produced by Chicago's **DJ Hot Rod** to air as part of the graduation celebration. The package is showcased through original short videos and segments produced by ABC7 Chicago and Localish.

"We are honored to not only produce this historic event for the city of Chicago's graduating seniors, but we are pleased to be able to expand the virtual graduation past our broadcast on WLS and Localish, and offer it to all television and radio stations across the city of Chicago," said John Idler, president and general manager, WLS-TV. "We are living in an unprecedented time, but that didn't stop the class of 2020. WLS wants to ensure that we produce and deliver an exciting, heartfelt send-off that can be felt by all graduating seniors and their families wherever they are throughout the city, and one that will not be forgotten."

In addition to ABC7, the virtual graduation ceremony will be broadcast on WGN-TV, WTTW, WCIU, CBS2, NBC5, FOX32 and Univision Chicago (WGBO-TV); and will air live on Localish Network in 14 million homes across the country, and on the Facebook page of WLS's 'Windy City.' WBEZ 91.5 FM Chicago will air portions of the graduation celebration and stream the entire ceremony live on WBEZ.org. Additionally, the city of Chicago will provide a [live-stream feed](#) from Chicago.gov and its [Facebook page](#). The ceremony will be closed captioned and Univision Chicago (WGBO-TV) will provide Spanish closed captioning.

ABC7 Chicago and Localish are the lead broadcasters and will showcase the live virtual celebration with a multiplatform focus that will leverage its promotional strength across ABC's linear, digital and social footprints. Viewers can stream live at ABC7Chicago.com, [ABC7's connected Apps](#), ABC7's [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and Localish on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and WLS-TV's 'Windy City Live' [Facebook](#). The station will also rebroadcast the special across its digital streaming platforms and connected TV.

About ABC7/WLS-TV Chicago

ABC7/WLS-TV Chicago is the No. 1 local news source and most-watched television station in Chicago. With top-rated daily newscasts spanning decades in linear broadcast and the largest social media presence in the market with more than 2.3 million Facebook followers, ABC7 Eyewitness News provides breaking news, investigative reporting, weather, politics, traffic and sports in the multiplatform space to Chicago, the suburbs and northwest Indiana. Named **Best News Operation** by the Associated Press for four consecutive years, the station produces 41 hours of local news weekly in addition to producing Chicago's only local weekday entertainment talk show, "Windy City LIVE," as well as its highest-rated New Year's Eve special. ABC7's award-winning community outreach includes programs showcasing the city's diversity such as "Heart and Soul," "The Ñ Beat" and "Asian Influences"; producing and broadcasting parades representing Chicago's rich cultural history; town halls focused on current social issues; annual partnerships with the Red Cross for life-saving blood drives; and most recently, spearheading an effort to raise more than \$1.5 million for area food pantries.

About Localish

Localish, a digital native lifestyle brand from ABC Owned Television Stations featuring locally sourced yet nationally relevant stories which target a younger audience, debuted its broadcast home on Feb. 17, 2020. In Localish's first year, ABC's owned stations produced over 700 pieces of digital video, totaling more than 240 million video views, with 65% of its audience under the age of 44. Most recently honored with the 2019

Innovator Award – the highest distinction among TVNewsCheck’s annual Social Media Excellence Awards – Localish was credited for its forward-minded ideas, sleek execution and all-around positive impact. As a broadcast network, Localish expanded its short-form series of local storytelling into long-form programming to reach approximately 14 million households across America. The brand also continues to debut stories on localish.com, ABC digital platforms and social media platforms, as it transcends city limits and inspires its audience to live like a local wherever they are.

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